INTERVIEW

DIRK PIEPER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, BIELEFELD UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

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Michael: You have been presenting your projects at Bielefeld University Library (BUL) a lot internationally in 2015; LIBER, Sustainable Open Access (Copenhagen) and now on our way to the 10th Munin Conference. What explains this interest?

Dirk: From my point of view the Netherlands and the UK are leading the Open Access (OA) development in Europe and I'm positively surprised by the interest for what we are doing in Bielefeld. We both met in Utrecht at the Knowledge Exchange workshop and I had the chance to meet David Solomon there. He knew the German open apc (article processing charge) data set, we had been working on at BUL. What is unique is, that we have – due to the policy of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) - a dataset on bibliographic information and cost information for articles in real OA journals that differs from the data gathered in the UK. It is necessary that other countries in Europe and beyond create those data to compare them across countries and to conclude, what might be the right strategy for realizing a transformation to OA.

M: The open apc data project is released on GitHub and now BUL runs a continuation project funded by the DFG entitled INTACT. What is new and why is it being funded?

D: We started open apc at BUL in 2014. DFG is funding the OA publication funds in Germany since 2010 and every participant has to write a report each year, though this is very work intensive. We figured out in Bielefeld, how to optimize data reporting of apc expenditures every year by creating workflows leading to a minimum of effort. I attended the German Library Conference in Bremen (2014) and Frank Scholze (Director of Karlsruhe Institute of Technology) told me that Wellcome Trust (UK) was releasing it's apc data at that time. So it started to work in my head and along with Najko Jahn from BUL, we formed the open apc initiative. Supported by the DINI Working Group on Electronic Publishing, some German Libraries were willing to give us the data about their apc expenditures and it started to grow.
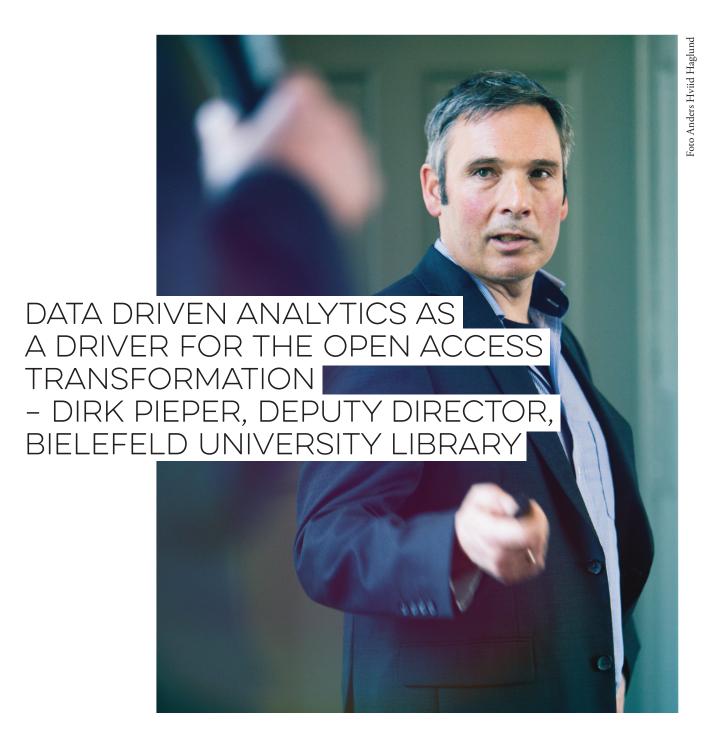
On my way back from Utrecht, I wrote the first notes for the proposal to the INTACT project, mailed it to Najko and then we did the proposal. The other INTACT partners are the Max Planck Digital Library (MPDL) and the Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies of Science (I²SoS), Bielefeld University. I admire what they are doing at MPDL, for example the white paper on the necessary large-scale transformation to OA and they have enough power to get the really important people at the table, which is great for the international dissemination of the project.

The third partner is I²SoS and they can use the raw data of WoS and Scopus. The data quality in WoS and Scopus is sometimes not as good as expected, even when it comes to relate certain publications to institutions. The I²SoS is doing the normalization of different names for institutions and this is needed for our project as well, in order to reach the biggest data quality as possible. So I´m really happy having the possibility to work with partners with academic bibliometric competences and international prominence. Maybe the DFG is funding us, because they can trust in the competence of each partner and see the potential of the three partners working together.

M: INTACT is working to fit open apc data into an OLAP server as a Business Intelligence solution. Is it aimed only at German institutions or could other European institutions apply for depositing data and in the end provide a pan-European service oriented architecture?

D: Yes, the more technical side of INTACT is done by BUL and certainly, we would be very delighted if institutions from around Europe or the globe would join in. There are other initiatives of the same scope on the market but in detail we have the problem of different qualities of data, e.g. when it comes to publisher or journal title names, or which kind of expenditures to collect. I think the data workflow we have, using CrossRef APIs and options for adding data like additional identifiers, leads to a higher quality. Maybe we can share and optimize these workflows with other initiatives leading to a similarity and opportunity to compare data sets and make better analysis. It's crucial to focus on a European solution because the market for OA is not a national market in every country, but an international one. If we succeed building up an infrastructure of publishing expenditures that allows academic institutions around Europe to rely on, we are far beyond of the scope of the project. But let's see!

M: You have an interesting project culture around INTACT and the staff is very skilled to the technical side along with

DATA DRIVEN ANALYTICS AS A DRIVER FOR THE OPEN ACCESS TRANSFORMATION
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using open science tools for handling data. When managing a project of this scope do you hire in consultants or have in-house capacities at the university library?

D: We hired a person for INTACT, because getting funded now, we are able to hire externally. We had the luck to find a computer scientist coming from our university. Before INTACT he was employed in one of the Excellence Clusters and then came to a library project with the aim of providing a research data infrastructure for sociologists. This was his first encounter with the library sector and obviously, he wasn't terrified too much by us.

We see that the people in our projects are now a mixture of both librarians and computer scientists. We've built a unit over the last years, capable of doing projects at a European level. I mentioned OpenAire and we have the OA project BASE (Bielefeld Academic Search Engine) and we're also part of the Europeana Cloud project. We have solid competence build up to use and develop data science tools and software to both handle, store and visualize data and I believe, this is the right direction for librarians in the future. I'm a bit skeptical about the so-called information competence movement, which to me is mostly about introducing a catalog, database or search engine and these are not the only needs in a university.

M: So, you think in the direction of Data Information Literacy (DIL) as a much more grounded theory or practice outside Europe?

D: For sure, I think in this direction as a deputy director of a university library, and I'm both happy and fortunate that we have employees, who are familiar with appropriate software and always are looking for new and improved tools to solve problems and challenges. FX we use Slack as a tool for running the communication within the INTACT project, which is something in my age, I didn't know before. So it is great and real fun for me to get input from engaged and skilled younger people.

M: There has been much fuss of the white paper published from the MPDL here in 2015. It shows in the data the interesting perspective that it is possible economically to make an OA transition, but does not give any directions on how to. Do you have a solution?

D: Not a ready one in my pocket, but it can't be underestimated, what MPDL have done. We met in Utrecht, when the paper was nearly published and it was already discussed there. We also had a conference in Göttingen where some German libraries tried to figure out how a transformation could be done. Though, the only aim of the paper was to show, under different scenarios, that a transition to OA is possible based on expenditures of raw license-to-read data. The next step has to be done at the 12th Berlin Conference. There will be a workshop at MPDL in March 2016, where librarians from Europe come together to discuss experiences of offsetting models. Here the aim is to create a transition path and of course it isn't only an economical one. It also has organizational implications at libraries, technical ones and the whole workflows within acquisition departments will change in the future. It takes some time for people to accept that there will be a change in the near future and probably there will be much less traditional subscription licenses in 10 years, at least in STM. I think the percentage of funding for OA publications and the percentage of offsetting models - however they will look like in the future - will be much higher than today.

M: The Dutch approach to fulfill it's national OA strategy is via the golden route with VSNU leading the way at a much more political and strategic level involving researchers and the management of universities at the negotiation table with publishers. Does this model have the potential to realize full open access on the market?

D: I consider it as a first step. I'm not convinced the hybrid model will force publishers to do the transition in reality. After the first round of offsetting models, there have to be strong signals by universities and university libraries for a real change to Open Access. So, I regard offsetting as a kind of transition. I think there has to be some pressure by the universities, funding bodies and associations to do the transformation in reality. Not only the publishers have to move, but also the libraries and especially the big library consortia.

M: Ahead of this interview you wrote: are you going to ask me about popular music or soccer? Actually, I've a final one on soccer, because when arriving in Copenhagen, you were wearing a St. Pauli cap and you come from Bielefeld. That doesn't make sense!?

D: Well, I was at Hamburg University studying political science and economics before entering the library sector. At that time we were studying a little longer than nowadays. So of course I spent most time at the soccer stadium, Millerntor and since that I'm a fan. Later I went to Bielefeld, which wasn't as great as in Hamburg, but it is worthwhile great living there with my family and the university library is something I enjoy. On Monday Dec. 14, I will go with staff from BUL and some other friends to watch Bielefeld against St. Pauli; of course convinced of a victory to favorite team.

M: Geil! Good luck with the game and your presentation at the Munin Conference.

Dirk Pieper is Deputy Director at Bielefeld University Library and responsible for projects and innovation. He is also a member of several national and international boards and initiatives like "Efficiency and Standards for Article Charges" (ESAC) and the "EBSCO European Academic Advisory Board".
From 2004-2014 he was the Head of Media Department at Bielefeld UL. He holds a degree in political science and economics from Universität Hamburg.

Dirk has been involved in several Open Access projects:
2015: INTACT
2014: Open APC project
2011: PDA of E-books
2009: Funding of Open Access publications at Bielefeld University
2004: BASE (Bielefeld Academic Searcher Engine)

Publications: https://pub.uni-bielefeld.de/person/132436